INTERACT

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ICSEW
Interagency Committee of State Employed Women

Service Torch Passed to New Members

Photo by Shirley Toner

New ICSEW members pose during July's transition meeting.

By Laura Leland

Standing members met last month with new members of the Interagency Committee of State Employed Women (ICSEW) to pass the torch of service. New executive board members were also announced.

There are a number of board positions remaining to be filled, including the chair. Also, more new members will soon be announced. Please read the December 2001 issue of *Inter*Act for complete information.

Term Ends for 2000-2001 Executive Board

By Laura Leland

Outgoing executive board members gathered at July's transition meeting to mentor new members. They also helped new board members settle down to the work of ICSEW.

Photo by Laura Leland

Outgoing Executive Board members, front row, left to right: Debbie Robinson, Promotional and Career Opportunities; Sheila Johnson-Teeter, Membership; Karen Dunn, Conference; Janet McTurnal, Health Care/Wellness; Brenda Landers, Budget. Back row, left to right: AnnyKay Melendez, Vice Chair; Donna Lynch, Communications; Kathy Shore, Chair; Gail Grosvenor-Nyreen, Education; and Maryann Connell, Child Care Task Force. Not pictured: Marla Oughton, Executive Secretary and Carol Maher, Historian.

Domestic Violence and the Workplace: It *IS* Our Business!

Editor's Note: October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

By Teresa Atkinson
Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Domestic violence doesn't stay at home when women go to work—it is also a workplace issue. Domestic violence often becomes workplace violence. As employees, union members, managers or co-workers, it is our responsibility to recognize that domestic abuse is a serious, recognizable, and preventable problem, just like other workplace health and safety issues.

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and a time for all of us—men and women—to speak out about this taboo subject.

Thousands of women in this country have survived domestic violence, raised healthy families, and contributed their skills to their workplaces and communities. You can make a difference in the lives of survivors and their children by raising awareness and being a safe resource at work.

Domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive, coercive, dominating, and punishing behaviors. Abusers use a variety of tactics, not just violence, to control the victim's behavior —for example, humiliating her in front of co-workers or convincing her that she is incapable of making good decisions. Tactics can include physical, sexual and psychological attacks as well as economic coercion. Domestic violence is a learned behavior and can be un-learned. It is *not* caused by anger, psychological problems, drugs and alcohol, or other common excuses. There are no "typical" victims or perpetrators of domestic violence—domestic violence can affect people of every economic, ethnic, and racial background and sexual orientation.

Each year, according to the FBI, almost one million women become victims of violence at the hands of an intimate partner—a current or former husband, boyfriend, girlfriend, or domestic partner. At work, women are also more likely than men to be attacked by an intimate partner, whereas men are more likely to be attacked by a stranger. While domestic violence can happen between anyone, according to the FBI, most cases involve a female victim and a male abuser.

What Are Signs of Abuse?

Be alert to possible signs of domestic violence:

•Changes in behavior and work performance, lack of concentration.

•Increased or unexplained absences or arriving late.

•Harassing phone calls.

•Bruises or injuries that are unexplained or come with explanations that just don't add up.

How Do Abusers Impact the Workplace?

•Making physical or sexual assaults or threats against the woman, children, and sometimes against her co-workers; threats of suicide; threats to take the children; threats to destroy property, or to hurt family pets.

•Making her account for every minute of the day—for example, the abuser always drops her off and picks her up from work; stalks her; or makes frequent phone calls or emails to monitor her whereabouts.

•Canceling her appointments with employee assistance or her health care provider; sabotaging her efforts to attend appointments by not providing childcare or transportation.

•Controlling her use of sick or vacation time; making her explain the sick or vacation time she used as reported on her pay stub.

•Making her late for work or sabotaging her performance. For example, keeping her up all night, destroying work or professional clothes, sabotaging her childcare arrangements, undermining her training or advancement, so that she runs the risk of poor evaluations or getting fired.

•Isolating her from co-workers, friends and family, so that she has no support system other than the abuser.

What Can I Do?

•Remember that safety for the victim comes first.

•In an emergency, call 9-1-1.

•Initiate a conversation; make yourself visible as a resource. Listen; believe what you hear.

•Maintain confidentiality.

•Let her know that she is not alone and that she is not to blame for the abuse.

•Express concern for her safety and that of her children.

•Ask what assistance (if any) would be most useful.

•Support her right to make her own decisions, and respect her wishes. Don't impose your expectations or your judgment of her choices on her. Realize that if you tell her what to do, you become another person who is trying to control her choices.

•Trust her assessment of her situation and her safety. She alone knows what her abuser is capable of.

•Urge her to talk to someone with expertise and experience in domestic violence—for example, an advocate at your local non-profit domestic violence program who can listen and help problem-solve.

• Do not suggest joint counseling or mediation between the victim and the batterer. These have proven to be dangerous for victims and their children.

• Encourage her to think about developing an emergency safety plan for herself and her children. Suggest she consult with domestic violence advocates about developing a safety plan.

• Post information about domestic violence and resources in public places, including women's restrooms.

• Encourage your department or union to take a public stand on domestic violence and the workplace. Invite a speaker from

Continued on page 3.

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Photocopying, distributing and posting of this publication is strongly encouraged. This publication is available in alternate formats. All persons interested in submitting articles or ideas for this publication should contact their agency's ICSEW representative or:

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Domestic Violence –

Continued from page 2

your local non-profit domestic violence program to your workplace, management team, or union meeting. Organize a food or toy drive for the battered women's shelter. Learn about workplace domestic violence policies.

• Continue to educate yourself about domestic violence. Familiarize yourself with local domestic violence programs and basic legal options available in your area.

What Can I Say to Someone Dealing with Domestic Violence?
Remember that asking is the key to intervention. Even if you don't get a response, it opens the door for future discussions and lets her know that you are a safe resource.

Examples of What to Say
• "I am concerned for the safety of you and your children."

• "Are you in a relationship with someone? Has that person ever hurt you?"

• "I know that some women with injuries like yours have been hurt by someone close to them. Is this happening to you?"

• "I'm concerned because I know it can happen again in a relationship where there has been violence or where someone has been hurt."

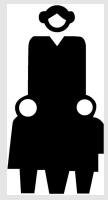
• "I'm concerned about you. You seem to be having some difficulties. I would like to assist you in any way possible, and I would also like to give you some information about resources that may be useful to you."

• "I care about you and don't want to see you hurt. You don't deserve to be hurt."

• "Sometimes it is helpful to talk to someone who can just listen. Sometimes this can help sort through what's happening. How about if I give you some phone numbers of advocates you can talk to confidentially? They will listen to your concerns and help you think about your options."

What Are Common Barriers to Asking about Domestic Violence?
• Denial: Assuming that the question doesn't need to be asked, because "domestic violence doesn't happen that often, and it certainly doesn't happen in our community / workplace / union / family / management team / circle of friends / religious community / etc."

• Pessimism: Assuming that it won't help to ask, and that the person will never find safety, leave the relationship, or seek help.



Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-562-6025

• Personal Feelings: Feeling uncomfortable because the subject brings up your own personal issues.

• Lack of Knowledge: Feeling uncomfortable because you are not familiar with the dynamics of domestic violence and the local resources that are in your area.

• Powerlessness and Isolation: Feeling powerless to help; not knowing how to help once someone discloses that they are experiencing problems; feeling like you are the only one who knows or cares.

Your local domestic violence program can help you address these issues with education and training.

What Should I NOT Do?
• Don't judge, criticize or blame her for staying in the relationship or making choices you don't understand. Victims face many barriers to leaving safely. Some abusers threaten to kill their partners or their children if they leave.

• Don't oversimplify or minimize the situation; domestic violence is a complex and potentially dangerous situation.

• Don't try to "rescue" the person dealing with domestic violence, or take on more than you can handle. It is a complex situation that may take years to resolve. If you are feeling overwhelmed, call your local domestic violence program to speak with an advocate.

• Don't confront or talk to the batterer about the abuse while the victim is present. This endangers her and you.

• Don't try to mediate with the abuser. Remember that abusers use manipulation to control their partners; they are often charming, "nice" people.

• Don't expect change overnight. Remember that leaving is a process. Continue to be there to offer support over the long haul.

• Don't break confidentiality. This puts the victim in greater danger.

If you are dealing with domestic violence and need help, please call the Washington State Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-562-6025 (V/TTY). Advocates will transfer you to a domestic violence program in your area that can assist you.

The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a non-profit, 501(c)3 network of 64 domestic violence programs in rural, urban and Indian Country communities of Washington. Our mission is to end domestic violence through advocacy and action for social change.

For more information and resources on domestic violence, or how you can make a difference in the lives of battered women and children, please contact the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, (360) 407-0756, wscadv@wscadv.org or visit our Web site at www.wscadv.org.

Excerpts for this material were adapted from, "The Workplace Responds to Domestic Violence: A Resource Guide for Employers, Unions and Advocates," produced by the Family Violence Prevention Fund. Edited by Donna Norton, Esq., Stephen T. Moskey Ph.D. and Elizabeth Bernstein.

Women and Violence

In 1994, there was one rape for every 270 women, one robbery for every 240 women, one assault for every 29 women, and one homicide for every 23,000 women in the United States.

Each year about one million women become victims of violence at the hands of an intimate—a husband, ex-husband, boyfriend, or ex-boyfriend. This is seven times higher than the rate of violence committed by an intimate against male victims.

In a 1998 study conducted by the National Institute of Justice, 18% of women surveyed said they experienced a completed or attempted rape at some time in their life. Of these women, 22% were under 12 years old and 32% were 12-17 years old when they were first raped.

During the 1996-1997 school year, there were an estimated 4,000 incidents of rape or other sexual assaults in public schools across the country.

Of female homicide victims, 30% are killed by intimates—a rate that has held steady over the last 20 years.

Women in families with incomes below $10,000 per year were more likely than other women to be violently attacked by an intimate. Geographically, however, women living in central cities, suburban areas and rural locations experienced similar rates of violence committed by intimates.

Living From the Inside Out

© By Mimi Welch,
Women in Transition

Major life transitions involve specific phases that, when managed effectively, lead a person or organization to achieve their full potential. Understanding those phases and knowing the difference between change and transition are the first steps to increasing the odds that you'll successfully manage the process to get what you want versus simply surviving the experience.

Which is which? Transition happens "within" a person or organization; change happens "to" them. Transition, which occurs less frequently than change, is multi-faceted and involves complete shifts in orientation, values, motivations and beliefs. This internal metamorphosis is often accompanied by a series of external changes that can affect work, relationships, and lifestyle. Regardless of the excitement some transitions bring, they are often accompanied by helplessness, confusion, fear and paralysis. Ironically, though we frequently plan for change, we rarely plan how to maneuver through major transitions.

Phases of Transition: The process of transition can be characterized by four distinct phases each with their own characteristics and effective management techniques.

Ending: The loss of stability and comfort with one's self-perception. During this time we may feel sad, lonely and mournful. All understandable feelings considering what we used to be no longer exists. It is critical that we loosen our hold on the way things were so we can allow the renewal process to begin.

Morphing: The uncontrollable change of one's self-definition. Feelings of detachment, disorientation and emptiness characterize this phase. Keen attention to the internal process of re-definition can be achieved by practicing the 3-S's: Silence, Solitude and Surrender. By honoring these we create the powerful opportunity for self-discovery that is necessary to redefine what brings meaning to our lives.

Beginning: The emergence of a new or significantly changed sense of self. Finally we begin to feel a sense of relief, excitement and fresh energy. At this point it's time to act with intention and take on a "Ready, Aim, Fire" attitude. Planning for completeness—in all areas of your life—is essential to living to our full potential.

Attainment: The full integration and engagement of a new self-definition. At last we feel calmness, acceptance and harmony. In order to maintain such balance we must align our planets, so to speak, by conscientiously acting in a way that acknowledges and honors our renewed self. To do otherwise is to diminish the transition process and will likely mean going back through a similar experience.

Critical to successfully managing each phase of transition is the practice of living from the inside out. Simply put, this means looking inward to determine what is most important, and actively defining what makes you unique. Identifying your values, principles and capacity empowers you to act and make choices in a way that is congruent with what you find fulfilling. You are better prepared to establish boundaries, set priorities and confront difficult situations once you know where you stand within your own core.

It takes courage and insight to live from the inside out. Through transition we're offered the opportunity to accept that challenge and engage in the process of living our lives to their full potential. The result of fully engaging in our own transformation is a personal sense of completeness and richness that external circumstances can never diminish. Are you ready to accept the challenge?

"Are you ready to accept the challenge?"

Mimi Welch, President of Women In Transition, is dedicated to helping organizations and women understand and manage the process of transition to ensure they get the most out of the experience versus simply surviving it. Unique training, presentations and educational materials provide practical principles and techniques that guide participants through a discovery and action planning process that can be used over a lifetime of transitions.

For more information contact Ms. Welch at Mwelch@aboutwomenintransition.com or (305)853-0007.

ICSEW to Offer Women in Transition Workshops

The ICSEW Education Committee is co-sponsoring a three-day series of "Women in Transition" workshops presented by Mimi Welch. Workshops are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Oct. 31–Nov. 2, at the Department of Natural Resources building in training room 175-B. A hybrid workshop combining both topics is planned for Nov. 2. The cost is yet to be determined and will be announced soon in an upcoming flyer. You must be a member of ICSEW to attend.

The following workshops will be offered:

"Managing the Four Phases of Transition": Learn the four stages of transition and apply techniques to manage each. This is an intense day focused on assessing where you are in the transition process, what you can do about it and what skills and techniques help you get what you want and need from the experience.

"Living from the Inside Out": Invest in your "self" and define what's important and what's not. Participants create a comprehensive assessment of their values, preferences and transition goals. A practical and customized action plan is created by each person that gives them a direction and sense of control over their transformation experience.

Myths and Facts about Going to College as an Adult

Myth: College is for young people.
Fact: 40% of American college students are 25 years old or older.
Myth: There's no financial aid for adult students.
Fact: The majority of student aid programs have no age restrictions. Anyone who demonstrates financial need can qualify. However, many programs require students to attend on at least a half-time basis.
Myth: It's impossible to juggle parenthood, work and going to school.
Fact: Juggling adult responsibilities and school can be difficult, but not impossible. More colleges are restructuring programs to help students manage their obligations. Classes are offered in the evening, student services are available at night or over the Internet and even low-cost childcare is available on many campuses.